

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN CU (RODRIGUEZ, CARLOS RAFAEL)

SUBJECT: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CUBA - VIEWS OF ITALIAN
JOURNALIST

ENNIO CARRETTO, A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT FOR LA STAMPA,
HAS TOLD EMBOFF HE HAD EXTENSIVE MIDNIGHT CONVERSATION WITH
CUBAN GOVERNMENT LEADER CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ DURING MID-
JANUARY VISIT TO CUBA. ACCORDING TO CARRETTO, RODRIGUEZ WAS
CONFIDENT, OPTIMISTIC, AND RELAXED ABOUT CUBA'S PRESENT
SITUATION, AND SPOKE WITH THE AUTHORITY OF A MAN WHO MIGHT RANK
ONLY BEHIND FIDEL IN ACTUAL POWER HIERARCHY. OTHER POINTS MADE
BY RODRIGUEZ.

1. CUBA'S POSITION TODAY. CUBA HAS ESSENTIALLY "WON"
ITS ARGUMENT WITH THE US, BECAUSE THE EMBARGO HAS FAILED
AND OAS SOLIDARITY AGAINST CUBA HAS ERODED. MANY NATIONS
ALLIED TO THE US TRADE OPENLY WITH CUBA, AND JAPAN, FOR
EXAMPLE, IS FINANCING ITS EXPORTS TO CUBA. THE OAS IN
ITS ORGINAL FORM IS FINISHED EVEN IF THE SHELL REMAINS
FOR MANY YEARS. FOR THIS REASON, CUBA HAS NO DESIRE
TO REJOIN THE OAS REGARDLESS OF THE OAS POSITION AT THE
FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING. RODRIGUEZ PREDICTS THAT IN
DUE COURSE A NEW ORGANIZATION WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY THE
LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS THEMSELVES, WITH PERHAPS CANADA.
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THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE FREE TO JOIN, BUT ON LATIN

AMERICA'S TERMS. IN THIS REGARD, LATIN AMERICA IS DEVELOPING A GROWING SOLIDARITY WHICH CUBA IDENTIFIES WITH AND WHICH THE US CAN NO LONGER CONTROL. (VENEZUELA WAS CITED AS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS.) FOR THIS REASON, CUBA DOES NOT NEED TO "EXPORT REVOLUTION" BECAUSE TIME IS ON HER SIDE AND THE "SOCIALIZATION" OF LATIN AMERICA IS NOW INEVITABLE, EVEN IF IT TAKES 100 YEARS. THUS, CUBA SEES NO NEED TO CHANGE ITS POLICIES, AS CALLED FOR BY THE US.

2. ELECTIONS. RODRIGUEZ SAID THAT THEY MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER.

3. RELATIONS WITH US. DESPITE COMMENT ABOVE ABOUT NO NEED FOR CUBAN POLICY CHANGES, CARRETTO FEELS THAT CUBANS DESIRE RELATIONSHIP WITH US FOR ECONOMIC REASONS AND ALSO TO OFFSET OVER-DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR. CARRETTO CITES VISIBLE SOVIET PRESENCE IN CUBA, INCLUDING SOVIET TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS, TECHNICIANS, ETC. CONCLUSION IS THAT CUBA WOULD WELCOME LOW-PROFILE RELATIONSHIP WITH US AS LONG AS SUCH DID NOT REQUIRE CUBAN ADMISSION OF CHANGE IN POLICIES.

4. ATMOSPHERICS. CARRETTO, WHO HAS ALSO SERVED AS CORRESPONDENT IN SOVIET UNION, FEELS THAT RAPPORT EXISTS BETWEEN CUBAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE ENTIRELY MISSING IN OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES HE HAS VISITED. HE FEELS THERE IS GENUINE GIVE AND TAKE, IN WHICH LEADERSHIP RESPONDS TO POPULAR COMPLAINTS. ATMOSPHERE IN HAVANA AND COUNTRYSIDE WAS RELAXED, WITH HARDLY ANY MILITARY IN EVIDENCE. ANTI-US POLEMICS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY RESTRAINED, WHICH CARRETTO INTERPRETS AS A "SIGNAL" THAT CUBA WISHES TO EXPLORE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH US, WITHOUT ABANDONING OFT-STATED POLITICAL OR IDEOLOGICAL GOALS.

FYI - CARRETTO IS YOUNG MODERATE JUST RETURNED FROM SURVEY TRIP OF VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, JAPAN, US AND CUBA. HE IS RELIABLE, FRIENDLY TO US, AND HAS ALSO BEEN LA STAMPA CORRESPONDENT IN LONDON AND BRUSSELS. SERIES OF ARTICLES ON HIS TRIP WILL BEGIN SHORTLY. VOLPE

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